

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

~~SECRET/NOFORN/XGDS~~

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS: President Ford
President Jaafar Muhammad Nimeiri of the Sudan
Mansur Khalid, Minister of Education
Dr. Francis M. Deng, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs
Charles W. Robinson, Acting Secretary of State
Brent Scowcroft, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs

DATE AND TIME: Thursday, June 10, 1976
10:34 - 11:20 a.m.

PLACE: The Oval Office

[The press comes in, takes pictures, and then departs.]

President: Will you be starting your tour right away?

Nimeiri: Yes. We will start out in Tennessee.

President: Please give Governor Blanton my regards.

It is very nice to have you here. You will get a friendly reception as you travel through the United States.

We very much appreciate what you did to achieve the release of the five Americans that were held by the Eritreans. The American people are very grateful.

We hope our relations can improve both bilaterally and in international forums. I would be very grateful for your observations on the areas of our mutual concern. I know you just met with King Khalid, Prince Fahd and President Sadat and I would be interested in your observations on these as well.

~~SECRET/NOFORN/XGDS~~

CLASSIFIED BY BRENT SCOWCROFT
EXEMPT FROM GENERAL DECLASSIFICATION
SCHEDULE OF EXECUTIVE ORDER 11652
EXEMPTION CATEGORY 5 (b) (1, 3)
AUTOMATICALLY DECLASSIFIED ON Imp. to det.

Nimeiri: Thank you very much, Mr. President. I know I will enjoy my trip.

I would like to talk first about the Sudan. We are now in a position of unity and stability. We had help from friendly states in ending the Civil War which lasted 17 years. Now we are trying to develop and we are making a good start. We have a big country, with nine neighbors with many problems like we have. It is a big job just working with all our neighbors.

We look to the United States to help us in our program of development of the country and the area. We have some good friends in the area -- Egypt and Saudi Arabia. We seek peace and stability in the area and the elimination of foreign influence. In 1971 the Communist organizations started to attack me and imprisoned me for three days. So I eliminated them. There was a huge Communist campaign against us by all the Communist world. We eliminated them by ourselves, but we think we are a target of them in Africa. The Egyptians are with us, but the Communists are working through Libya.

President: President Sadat told me about the Libyans.

Nimeiri: I told President Sadat for three years about the Soviet Union before he found out for himself.

I told King Khalid and President Sadat that I would be talking to you. We all agreed that the danger in the area was big power interference. We agreed the Red Sea and Indian Ocean should not be under Soviet influence.

If we leave Ethiopia alone, they will be dominated by the Communists. You have had good relations with the Ethiopians. We must work to eliminate the Eritrean problem because that is the vehicle for the Soviets to get in. You have traditionally had a close military relationship with them; now they have started to train their military in the Soviet Union. We have told them to stop fighting the Eritreans and to start training them and integrating them. The Ethiopians did it last week but the Eritreans don't know whether to trust them. They want more guarantees. We think we can work with the Eritreans to accept the idea of autonomy within one country. If it goes on the way it has it will create big problems for my country.

We are getting help from many countries for the private sector to come into Sudan to help our development. If there is no security they won't come.

President: I understand you have great agriculture potential.

Nimeiri: Yes. The Arab Fund has given us \$6 billion for 10 years. We are doing well, but we must have peace. I am working to get Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and us, together with you, to help us in development.

Khalid: Sudan has great potential. We have 200 million acres of arable land. We need stability, funds, and the technical knowhow. We have stability now and need to maintain it. We are getting funds from the Arabs. We would now like the Western technicians to complete this trilateral project.

President: Is the UN helping?

Khalid: The World Bank is.

Nimeiri: We are working toward irrigation and the mechanics of agriculture.

President: What is your appraisal of the situation in Djibouti?

Nimeiri: As we told the French, we think Djibouti should have self-determination in which Somalia and Ethiopia should not interfere. Then there should be a guarantee which would keep Somalia and Ethiopia away. Perhaps the French, with the Arab League, could guarantee this.

President: Is Somalia dominated by the Soviet Union or is it still independent?

Nimeiri: We have told them they have more Soviet aid than they need for all of Africa. They tell us no, they don't have that much -- just for their own needs. We know the Soviet Union continues to move men and equipment in.

We know the Soviet Union is advising the Ethiopians to wipe out the Eritreans. That is very bad advice and no way to solve the problem.

President: We appreciate your support of the Sinai Agreement. The situation in Lebanon we consider serious. We understand that the Arab League has agreed on an inter-Arab force and the Libyans and Algerians have sent troops to Syria.

Nimeiri: The Arab League has voted for a force of six states to go in. This won't solve the problem, because the Phalangists are not a party to it. But the only way to succeed is really to take the arms away from all the combatants. Libya already has some forces there. It would be better if it were someone other than Libya.

President: We are pleased to know we are working together for your development. We will do what we can to support you with ¹⁰⁰100. ~~We will do what we can to support you with 100.~~ The solution is negotiations -- that is what we support. We feel the same about Geneva for the Middle East.

President: We certainly think the Middle East momentum has to be maintained. You are familiar with the PLO issue, which is an obstacle, but eventually we think there must be a meeting at Geneva. Maybe we should not negotiate right now, with the crisis in Lebanon, but that is our aim and objective -- to work with all the parties to continue toward peace.

Nimeiri: President Sadat told me he has strong faith in your aims. He thinks this year is a preparatory year because of your elections, but next year will be better.

President: I think you are right. We have to be practical, but at the same time we are determined not to let up -- and we have in the meantime to keep peace in the area.